

# NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Issue 5

March 2001

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## Upcoming NCTC Meeting

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission will be held **Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001 at 9:30 A.M.**, in the **Grass Valley City Council Chambers, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California.**

## Will the Never Come, Never Go! Ever Come Again???

### A Look at Rail in Nevada County



Nevada County Narrow Gauge Engine #5, Tank car 187, & Caboose #1

Nevada County is rich in rail history, dating as far back as 1874. It was between the years of 1874-1876 that the, twenty-two mile long, Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad was built by John F. Kidder. His widow Sarah, later became the world's first

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woman railroad president and was responsible for the Bear River high steel bridge (Robert M. Wyckoff, Never Come, Never Go!, 1986).

The Nevada County Narrow Gauge railroad served Grass Valley and Nevada City as a main-line connection unit at Colfax, until it was ordered to be abandoned on July 25, 1942. Over a period of 66 years, it carried untold hundreds of thousands of passengers, unknown millions of tons of machinery, commodities, supplies, and incidentally millions of dollars of gold bullion in its shotgun guarded mail car (Robert M. Wyckoff, Never Come, Never Go!, 1986).



The Nevada County Transportation Commission approved the restoration of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum and Interpretive Center, in April of 2000, to receive \$392,161 through the Transportation Enhancement Activities grant program.

### Rail Transit-Nevada City to Grass Valley

The Nevada County Transportation Commission is not the first public agency to have the acronym NCTC. In 1901, the Nevada County Traction Company was formed and franchised by

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the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, the City of Grass Valley, and the City of Nevada City. The original "NCTC" operated electric street cars from "one foot west of Pine Street on Broad" to Boston Ravine, a distance just under five miles (Robert M. Wyckoff Never Come, Never Go!, 1986). The electric street cars were in operation for 23 years, before the service was unceremoniously discontinued on January 3, 1924.



Nevada County Traction Company-Electric Street Car

After paving the highway between Grass Valley and Nevada City, it is believed that increasing automobile travel drained passengers away from the street cars and revenue fell off.

### Back to the Future

In the present day, the Nevada County Transportation Commission is considering alternative means of transportation, such as rail, to help reduce congestion related to the use of automobiles as the primary mode of choice.

In 1991, in consideration of Nevada County's population growth, increasing traffic congestion, and new rail funding opportunities, the Nevada County Transportation Commission authorized a study to

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evaluate the feasibility of rail options available to the region.

This study analyzed six corridors for potential rail passenger service improvements. The corridors were defined by reviewing existing and forecast traffic demands, congestion conditions, and considering planned transportation improvements. The six corridors defined for evaluation were:

1. SR 49: Auburn to Grass Valley
2. SR 20/49: Grass Valley to Nevada City
3. SR 174: Grass Valley to Colfax
4. Bohemian Bypass: Grass Valley to Rocklin/Roseville
5. I-80: Bay Area/Sacramento to Truckee/Reno
6. SR 20: Grass Valley to Marysville

This study concluded that the most promising opportunity for rail service in Nevada County would be the implementation of a recreational train service between the Bay Area and Truckee and Reno.

The study determined that development of a rail service along the Bohemian Bypass would not be economically feasible because of environmental and topographical constraints.

The study also pointed out that it would be more economically feasible to provide bus service between Nevada City and Grass Valley, and potential future rail connections in Colfax and Auburn.

In 1995, Caltrans completed the "Sacramento-Tahoe-Reno Intercity Rail Study". The goal of this study was to examine the feasibility of expanding passenger service along

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the I-80/ Tahoe corridor from Sacramento to Truckee and Reno/Sparks; and the suitability of establishing passenger rail service along the US 50 corridor from Sacramento to South Lake Tahoe.

Some of the key findings and conclusions from the study were as follows:

- The addition of one or two intercity passenger trains per day in the I-80 corridor between Sacramento and Reno/Sparks would provide an attractive alternative mode of travel to the mountain ski resorts, the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee, and Reno/Sparks without significantly hindering freight traffic.
- The extension of the Capital Corridor service to Reno/Sparks would have a positive impact on the farebox recovery.
- The study established that while the Reno/Sparks extension is feasible and desirable to most people, there are funding and institutional constraints which must be resolved to clear the way for implementation of this service.
- High speed rail would be the most likely long term option for the US 50 corridor beyond the year 2030.

#### **A Look at What's Happening in the Capital Corridor**



The Capitol Corridor intercity rail service provides Amtrak train and feeder bus services in Northern California. Currently, seven daily round-trip trains, supported by connecting feeder buses, serve the 172-mile rail corridor, which includes stops in Auburn, Rocklin, Roseville, Sacra-

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-mento, Davis, Suisan City-Fairfield, Martinez, Richmond, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Hayward, Fremont-Centerville, Santa Clara-Great America, and San Jose.

Amtrak's Capital Corridor intercity rail service offers travelers an alternative to the increasing traffic congestion on Interstates 80, 580, 680, and 880. The Capital Corridor's importance as a vital component of California's transportation system is best illustrated by its recent performance statistics.

The Capitol Corridor is Amtrak's fastest growing service in the nation, with a 41% increase in ridership during the Federal Fiscal Year 1999-2000. The Capital Corridor is now serving approximately 770,000 passengers per year.



In February 2000, the Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) working with the State, Amtrak, and Union Pacific Railroad implemented "The February 2000 Plan." Implementation of the Plan resulted in an increase in service of 17% (one additional San Jose-Sacramento roundtrip, and an improved train schedule to Auburn) with only an 8% increase in State/CCJPA operating costs.

In 1999-2000, revenue increased some 25%, resulting in a substantial improvement in the portion of the cost of service, which is covered by fares (35.7% in 1999-2000 versus 31.2% in 1998-1999).

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The current seven-train schedule will be the basis for the Capital Corridor Joint Power Authority's (CCJPA) Federal Fiscal Year 2000-01 service plan for the Capital Corridor. With supplemental funding and one additional trainset secured from the State, CCJPA will expand service late in April 2001. The service expansion will begin with the addition of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> daily round trips between Sacramento and Oakland. Subject to approval from the UPRR, the service expansion plan also proposes to add, at a minimum, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> daily round trip trains to/from San Jose, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> daily round trip trains to Roseville/Auburn.

### **The Future of Rail in California**



Responding to growing gridlock in California's complex transportation system, a 20-year, \$10.1 billion passenger rail improvement plan to increase mobility and provide more choices for travelers was recently announced by a broad coalition of public and private partners led by Amtrak, the nation's intercity passenger rail corporation.

"The California Passenger Rail System 20-Year Improvement Plan" calls for faster, more frequent and more convenient passenger rail service to all of the state's major population centers. It establishes goals for the state's existing and emerging rail corridors and proposes a bold vision enabling ridership to grow by 300 percent over the next 20 years, including:

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- Hourly service between Los Angeles and San Diego, with a trip time of less than 2 hours, down from the current 2 hours and 45 minutes.
- Hourly service between San Jose, Oakland, and Sacramento, with a trip time of 2 hours and 20 minutes, down from the current 3 hours.
- Expanded service in the Central Valley between Bakersfield and Sacramento and Bakersfield and Oakland.
- A total of 21 additional intercity roundtrips.
- The first downtown Los Angeles to downtown San Francisco service in 30 years.

The plan identifies new or expanded services to Las Vegas, Palm Springs, Reno, and Redding.

Intercity passenger rail service to Reno, Nevada is envisioned during the life of this plan as an emerging corridor. Improvements proposed under this plan, between Sacramento and Auburn/Colfax, are the first steps toward this service goal.

The "Sacramento - Tahoe - Reno Intercity Rail Study," dated August 1995, recommended extending the Capitol Corridor service to Reno with one intercity passenger train per day. Recently, the CCJPA has proposed consideration of up to four trains per day.

Amtrak, Caltrans, and CCJPA plan to study service expansion to Reno over the next several years to better quantify ridership potential, and the challenges to implementing this expanded intercity passenger rail service to Reno.

### **The Big Picture-High Speed Rail and Federal Funding**

In February 2001, Amtrak unveiled a bold long-term plan to help relieve the nation's chronic highway and airport congestion and provide more

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choice for travelers. The 20-year plan, which requires \$1.5 billion in federal capital each year, is designated to modernize and expand the passenger rail system nationwide, accelerate plans for high speed service in 11 federally-designated corridors with the nation's busiest traffic, and leverage billions more in non-federal investment.



Legislation is pending in Congress that would authorize \$10 billion in bonding over 10 years to finance high speed rail projects undertaken in partnership with the states.

"America's transportation system needs to be strengthened to keep pace with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," said Amtrak President and CEO, George D. Warrington. "This plan makes passenger rail a faster and more convenient travel option for millions of Americans, much as the launch of the interstate highway system helped to meet the growth of automobile travel over 40 years ago."

Rail's potential has been stymied by a large federal "Rail Investment Gap," the plan argues. Intercity rail currently receives less than one percent of all transportation spending. It has received about \$2 billion less annual appropriations than the amounts authorized since FY 1998. Currently, the per capita share of spending for rail in the U.S. ranks next to the countries of Estonia and Tunisia, far below that of other highly industrialized nations. Additionally, unlike aviation and highways, which have dedicated funds and certain appropriations, there is no stable source of federal funding for intercity rail.



**Capitol Corridor Intercity Rail Service  
Auburn, Rocklin, and Roseville Train Schedule**

Effective October 29, 2000

<b>From Auburn</b>	<b>Train 725</b>	<b>To Auburn</b>	<b>Train 728</b>	<b>Train 730</b>
Dep. Auburn	6:30 am	Dep. San Jose	1:25 p.m.	3:10 PM
Rocklin	6:53 am	Great America/Santa Clara	1:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Roseville	7:03 am	Fremount/ Centerville	2:15 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
Sacramento	7:59 am	Hayward	2:30 p.m.	4:15 p.m.
Davis	7:59 am	Dep. Oakland	3:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.
Suisun/Fairfield	8:23 am	Emeryville (b)	3:40 p.m.	5:40 p.m.
Martinez	8:44 am	Berkeley	3:44 p.m.	5:44 p.m.
Richmond	9:12 am	Richmond	3:52 p.m.	5:52 p.m.
Berkeley	9:20 am	Martinez	4:20 p.m.	6:20 p.m.
Emeryville (b)	9:30 am	Suisun/Fairfield	4:40 p.m.	6:40 p.m.
Oakland	9:40 am	Davis	5:07 p.m.	7:07 p.m.
Hayward	9:56 am	Sacramento	5:28 p.m.	7:40 p.m.
Fremont/Centerville	10:12 am	Roseville	5:55 p.m.	8:10 p.m.
Great America/Santa Clara	10:33 am	Rocklin	6:04 p.m.	8:20 p.m.
Arr. San Jose	10:55 am	Arr. Auburn	6:40 p.m.	8:40 p.m.

- (a) Shaded portion of the schedule indicates segment provided by connecting feeder bus service.
- (b) Amtrak thruway motorcoaches provide service to and from San Francisco from the Emeryville Station.
- (c) Connecting feeder bus service to Colfax from train 728 begins in Sacramento.

The Capitol Corridor provides evening service from Sacramento and the Bay Area to Placer County train stations in Roseville, Rocklin, and Auburn. Capitol Corridor train service has been discontinued to and from Colfax and has been replaced with connecting bus service. The Capital Corridor train service also provides connecting bus service from and to Nevada City (Express Mart), Grass Valley (City Hall), and Lake of the Pines (Combie Deli). (For specific details or to receive a Capitol Corridor schedule call 1-800-USA-RAIL)

Train #728 departs Oakland at 3:30 p.m., arriving in Sacramento at 5:25 p.m., and continuing to Roseville and Rocklin with a final stop in Auburn at 6:40 p.m.

The current morning train from Placer County to Sacramento and the Bay Area (#725) departs Auburn at 6:30 a.m.

For current riders to Roseville, Rocklin, and Auburn on train #730 at the 5:30 p.m. departure from Oakland, connecting motorcoach service will be available at Sacramento with arrival times within minutes of current train times. It is the intent of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority to restore this late evening train service along the segment between Roseville and Auburn as additional train sets (coach cars and locomotives) are made available.

**For more specific information on Amtrak's schedules, fares, and ticketing (including multi-ride discounts) call: 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit their website at: [www.amtrakcapitols.com](http://www.amtrakcapitols.com)**

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**Recently Adopted NCTC Mission Statement and  
Organization Flow Chart**

The Nevada County Transportation Commission recently updated and adopted its Mission Statement and Organization Flow Chart at the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The Mission Statement includes some of the activities that are to be conducted to achieve the mission. NCTC staff will use the implementation activities to measure the progress of each year's work in accomplishing NCTC's Mission. The Mission Statement and Organization Flow Chart are displayed on page 5 of the newsletter.

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## NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CREATING A BETTER FUTURE BY BUILDING UPON THE  
SUCCESES OF THE PAST



### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Nevada County Transportation Commission is to plan, communicate, and coordinate with the citizens and decision makers of Grass Valley, Nevada City, Nevada County, and the Town of Truckee, and with Caltrans to identify transportation needs, propose solutions, and assist in implementing projects to create a balanced regional transportation system, while protecting the rural qualities and historic character of Nevada County.

#### **Activities To Achieve The Mission, Include, But Are Not Limited, To The Following**

NCTC develops a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which includes the actions, funding recommendations, and policy direction necessary to meet the needs of each transportation system component in the region.

NCTC interacts with the community through workshops, news media, the Internet, and its bimonthly newsletter.

NCTC develops and adopts a Regional Transportation Improvement Program that is consistent with the RTP.

NCTC conducts a comprehensive planning process in the development of its annual Overall Work Program so that funds expended on planning projects will implement the goals of the RTP.

NCTC reviews transportation plans and programs of member agencies and endorses them based on consistency with the RTP and RTIP. In keeping with this responsibility, the NCTC strives to be creative in assisting the region in developing the revenues to construct improvement projects.

NCTC communicates and participates in workshops with Caltrans on proposed projects to be developed in the County of Nevada to ensure that the policies and goals of the RTP are implemented.

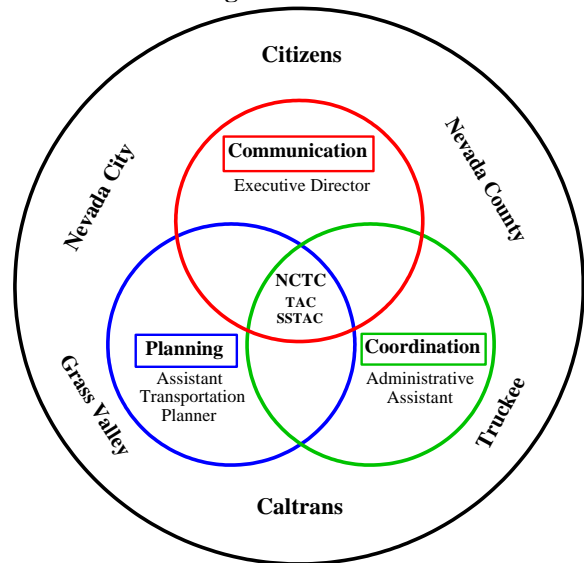
NCTC coordinates with regional transportation planning agencies on legislation and statewide policy issues to ensure the region receives appropriate attention and funding from the State of California and the Federal government.

NCTC participates in interregional planning projects to ensure Nevada County projects support both regional and statewide transportation goals.

NCTC administers Transportation Development Act funds to ensure all statutory requirements are met, including the identification of the region's transit needs.

NCTC manages Regional Surface Transportation Program funds and Regional Improvement Program funds in accordance with Federal acts and statutes promulgated by the State of California, selecting and funding eligible transportation improvement projects based upon those that are most effective and beneficial to the region.

## NCTC Organization Flow Chart



### **Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC)**

NCTC is a Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) created pursuant to Title 7.88, of the State of California Government Code, Section 67920. As the RTPA for Nevada County, the NCTC coordinates transportation planning for Grass Valley, Nevada City, Nevada County, and the Town of Truckee.

The NCTC board has seven members. Four members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and three are appointed by the incorporated municipalities in the County. The Board of Supervisors appoints two members from the Board of Supervisors and two County at-large representatives. The municipalities have appointed three city/town council members; one each from Nevada City, Grass Valley, and the Town of Truckee.

### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The TAC is made up of representatives of public transit operators, local public works and planning departments, public airport operators, the air pollution control district, and Caltrans. The Committee provides technical input on transportation issues and ensures there is coordination and cooperation in the transportation planning process.

### **Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)**

The goal of the SSTAC is to maintain and improve transportation services to the residents of Nevada County, particularly the elderly and disabled. The SSTAC recommends action by the Commission relative to the unmet transit needs finding, and advises the Commission on transit issues, including coordination and consolidation of specialized transportation services.

### **Nevada County Transportation Commission**

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates State and Federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the Cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

### **NCTC Commissioners**

Kerry Arnett  
Mayor of Nevada City

Bruce Conklin  
Nevada County Supervisor District 3

Robert W. Drake  
Vice Mayor, Town of Truckee

Ann Guerra  
Member-at-Large

Chet Krage, Chairman  
Member-at-Large

Linda Stevens, Chairwoman  
Mayor of Grass Valley

Peter Van Zant  
Nevada County Supervisor District 1

The Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter is published bimonthly. Interested persons and agencies can be added to the mailing list by writing or calling the Nevada County Transportation Commission office.

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